2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

INTRODUCTION.

THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY years ago the great navigator Magellan anchored in a port on the eastern coast of an unknown shore, part of the seaboard of the vast continent of South America, to which he gave the name of St. Julian. Starting from this point, the pilot Serrano explored the coast to the southward, and discovered a river which he named Santa Cruz. His ship was wrecked near the mouth, and left her timbers on the rocks, the first of the long list of vessels lost on that ironbound coast, which, from the mouth of the Rio Negro to the Straits, offers but one or two safe harbours, while submerged reefs, fierce gales, strong tides, currents, and overfalls combine to render it nearly the most perilous known to navigators.

Magellan remained at Port St. Julian and Santa Cruz from April till October of 1520, when he sailed southward, and discovered the Straits which bear his name. Two months after his arrival at Port St. Julian a man of gigantic stature appeared on the beach, 'larger and taller than the stoutest man of Castile.' Eighteen natives afterwards arrived dressed in cloaks of skins and shoes of guanaco hide, which made huge footmarks, whence they were called Patagonés, or 'large feet,' by the Spaniards; and thus originated in a nickname

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

175 the name of the country, Patagonia. These men used bows and arrows, and had with them four young guanacoes, with which they decoyed the wild ones within shot. Two young men were treacherously seized and carried off, howling and calling on their god Setebos. The natives naturally resented this return for their ready friendliness, and, attacking a party sent after them, killed one Spaniard with their arrows. Enough, however, was seen of them to furnish Pigafetta [342] with some details. 'Their tents were light movable frames, [302] covered with skins; their faces were painted; they were [412] very swift of foot, had tools of sharp-edged flints, and ate their meat nearly raw.'

That the first knowledge of Patagonia was diffused in England by Pigafetta's narrative is suggested by Caliban's lines in the 'Tempest': 'He could command my dam's god Setebos;' but it was not till 1578 that the newly-discovered country was visited by Englishmen.

Sir Francis Drake in that year anchored in Seal Bay—probably a little to the south of Port Desire—and saw several Indians. His chaplain narrates their method of stalking [224] the ostriches: 'They have a plume of ostrich feathers on a long staff, large enough to hide a man behind, and with this they stalk the ostriches.' He further says: 'They would have none of our company until such time as they were warranted by their god "Settaboth." They never cut their [302] hair, which they make a storehouse for all the things they [415] carry about—a quiver for arrows, a sheath for knives, a case for toothpicks, a box for fire-sticks, and what not; they are [534] fond of dancing with rattles round their waists; they have clean, comely, and strong bodies, are swift of foot, very active, a goodly and lively people. Magellan was not alto-

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

gether wrong in naming them giants, yet they are not taller than some Englishmen.' Drake next visited Port St. Julian; and, curiously enough, as Magellan had in this place put to death two and marooned a third of his captains who mutinied, so this harbour was the scene of the execution of Mr. Doughty, who chose rather to be beheaded than to be put on shore. The ensuing year Sarmiento was despatched from Callao to examine the Straits in search of the daring Englishman. He saw natives who chased their game on horseback, and brought it down with bolas. But fifty years had elapsed since horses had been imported by the Spaniards of the Rio de la Plata, and already the Indians in the far south had become horsemen, and would seem to have exchanged their bows and arrows for the bolas.

In 1581 Sarmiento was sent from Spain with 2,500 men in twenty-three ships, to found new colonies in the Straits, and established a settlement, leaving 400 men and thirty women furnished with eight months' provisions. On his way home his ship was captured by the English, and the unhappy colonists were altogether forgotten and neglected by their Government.

Five years after, Thomas Cavendish anchored in a bay to the south of St. Julian, called by him Port Desire, which perpetuates the name of his little craft of 120 tons. Here the natives attacked his men with bows and arrows. Visiting the Straits, he arrived at the settlement, and found only twelve men and three women surviving, the rest having perished of slow starvation and disease; and the name of the place, Port Famine, conferred by him, still recalls the miserable fate of these ill-fated colonists.

On his next voyage, in 1591, Cavendish died; but John

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

1775 Davis twice visited Port Desire, and explored the river for twenty miles. During his stay some 1,000 natives visited the strangers, and Knyvet describes them as being fifteen or sixteen span high.

Passing over the visits of Van Noort and Schouten, in the reign of Charles the Second, Sir John Narborough took possession of the country near Port Desire in the name of the King. But few natives were seen, and the mate, Mr. Wood, boastingly declared that he himself was taller than any of them.

In the eighteenth century Byron and Wallis successively visited the shores of Patagonia, and made friends with the natives, whose height was found to be from five feet ten inches to six feet, while some were nearly seven feet high.

In 1774, the Jesuit Father Falkner published his work on Patagonia, containing all the information procured by himself and the other Jesuit missionaries who had attempted to obtain a footing on the western and northern boundaries. His account of the Tehuelches, or Tsoneca Indians, was evidently derived from personal communication with them, although his knowledge of the topography of their country seems to have been procured from the reports of others. By this work, which produced a great sensation, the jealous fears of the Spanish Government were aroused, and they hastened to despatch an expedition to form settlements on the coast of Patagonia.

Of the brothers Viedma, who were sent in command, Francisco founded Carmen at the mouth of the Rio Negro; and Antonio, after first fixing on Port Desire, determined finally on Port St. Julian as the site of another colony. He thence undertook the first exploration of the interior in

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

search of timber for building, in the course of which he reached the great lake at the foot of the Cordillera, from which flowed the Rio Santa Cruz. Both on the coast and in the interior he received much friendly aid from the Indians, of whom he formed a most favourable opinion. 175

Under his brother's auspices the Rio Negro was ascended as far as the mountains of Villarino, to whose expedition reference will be made in the proper place.

No further knowledge was gained of the interior of Patagonia until the survey of the Beagle, so ably performed and so admirably described by Fitzroy and Darwin; during which the ascent of the Santa Cruz River for 200 miles enabled the latter to observe the remarkable formations which he has so aptly described in his work on the Geology of South America.

This brief but perhaps tedious account has been given to show that although the coasts of Patagonia had been explored and surveyed, yet the interior of the country, though pierced by the expeditions of Viedma and Fitzroy, remained up to a late date still almost unknown. Its inhabitants, the Tehuelches, had been often communicated with, their stature noted, and their friendly disposition commended; but their real manners of life as they wandered through the country, and their relations with, or difference from, the Araucanian and Pampa Indians, had remained almost as much a mystery as they were in the last century. 114

During the last thirty years the Governments of Chili and of Buenos Ayres have shown themselves inclined to claim the possession of the coast, the former trying to advance from the Straits, and the latter from Patagones; and the natives have acknowledged the influence of either Govern 175 177

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

175 177 ment as they happened to be in the northen or southern parts respectively. Our missionaries also have not left the Patagonians without some efforts to instruct and evangelise them; and although these efforts have been necessarily limited to the coast, yet the fruits of Mr. Schmid's sojourn with the Tehuelches remain both in their friendly feelings and in the lasting record of the vocabulary of the Tsoneca language published by him. And the intercourse of these Indians with Argentines and Chilians, and more especially with English officers, sealers, and missionaries successively, all of whom have testified favourably to their character, has tended to make them more open to access, and to give them a knowledge of foreigners; so that in this respect I can feel that to all those who have been mentioned as having thus preceded me, this brief record is due from a traveller who has experienced the friendly feelings of the natives towards strangers, and especially Englishmen.

114 While engaged in preparing the ensuing pages for the press, I have had an opportunity of perusing the work of M. Guinnard, first published in French, and recently given to the English public in a spirited translation, entitled 'Three Years' Slavery among the Patagonians.' The name necessarily attracted me, but to my great surprise careful perusal led to the distinct conviction that the author's personal experiences were altogether confined to the Pampas Indians north of the Rio Negro. From his own statements and omissions it is quite evident that he was not carried by any of his successive masters across this river, which he clearly and accurately defines to be (page 40) the northern boundary of Patagonia. The name of Patagonians is, therefore, a complete misnomer; and the curious account (pp. 72. 73) of the

Z: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5
Araucanians S64

were ignorant of their real strength, the cunning men of Carmen then displayed themselves as if for a reconnaissance, and retreated, but only to change their ponchos and reappear as a fresh detachment; the enemy was thus led by these repeated feints and transformations to considerably multiply the real numbers of the Argentine troops, and hesitate to attack so seemingly large a force. After nightfall the herbage in the neighbourhood of the bivouac of the invading army was set on fire. Bewildered by the smoke, the Brazilians retreated, but were encountered by other fires in their rear, and, seeing themselves apparently surrounded and opposed by superior numbers, their leader capitulated. The story is substantiated by the existence of the wreck of a Brazilian man-of-war, still visible in the river.

The fertile valley of the Rio Negro must needs be described in order to convey a proper idea of the resources of Patagonia as a colony. By far the greater extent of this valley is as uncultivated as when it was first explored by Don Basilio Villarino, who, under the orders of Viedma, ascended the river in order to ascertain its source, and whose diary is extant in the collection of De Angelis, a valuable abstract of it having been given by Sir W. Parish, though sufficiently long ago in our rapid age to be almost forgotten. He ascended with launches first as far as the Island of Choelechel, seventy leagues from Carmen, which he recommended should be fortified as an advance post against the Indians; thence, after incredible difficulties, he succeeded in reaching the foot of the Cordillera, always keeping on good terms with the natives. Here he met with the Araucanians (termed by me Manzaneros), and was in great hopes of reaching Valdivia through their aid, as they showed themselves friendly disposed; when, unfortunately, the Indians fell out amongst themselves, one of the chiefs being killed in the *mêlée*. The chief who caused this man's death came with his people to the Spaniards to implore their assistance, which was promised. This led to the whole of the remaining

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5
Araucanians 564

Indians forming a league and declaring war against the Spaniards, whose name up to the present they detest. Being obliged to abandon his intention of reaching Valdivia, Vallerino reluctantly determined to return, and accordingly after being supplied by his allies with a store of apples and pifiones, descended the river and returned to Carmen.

From the description of this journey, together with the mention of the supplies of apples and pifiones obtained at the furthest point reached, I am inclined to assume that this point was near, if not identical with, the place where we passed the Limay on our journey to Las Manzanas, a mile or two below the rapids where Mr. Cox was wrecked.

Villerino states that he entered in his small boat a channel where the river flowed over rounded stones to the S.W. Now the point where Mr. Cox's boat was lost was a rapid to all appearance impassible for a boat: however, it is possible that Vallerino employed Indians on horseback to track his boat, and that the state of the river was more favourable for navigation at the period of his visit.

The mention of the friendly Indians who accompanied him on his return and settled under the protection of the Spaniards, suggests the idea that these may have been the ancestors of Las Manzanas or the Tasso Indians, at present in the service of the Government. Casimiro had a legend about Indians friendly to the first Spanish settlers, who were subsequently ill-treated by them, and I believe revolted. Luis Aguirre also asserted that his father was one of the original chiefs of the Rio Negro, who for a long time was friendly to the Spaniards, but at length, a revolt taking place, was imprisoned and kept in Carmen as a hostage, where he died. In the year 1882, when Roca, for the protection of the southern frontier, made his great attack on the Indians, and driving them back to the neighbourhood of the Cordillera, forced them to submit to his terms, he established a military post at Choelechel, as advised by Villerino. His scheme was, I believe, to extend from this point a chain of forts as

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SHS Tehuelche SHS
Araucanians S64

I
1 for as Mendoza, thus keeping the Indians quite inside 775
the chain, and driving the Araucanos up to their native valleys of the Cordillera.

This plan was never carried out, and the post, to which the name Isla de Rosas had been given, was abandoned. Rosas was, notwithstanding his having beaten the Indians back, very popular amongst them, and on his overthrow a relation of his, Don Pedro Rosas, took refuge in the Salinas with his artillery and battalion. Orkeke and several friends of mine often inquired after Rosas, saying that 'he was a good man,' &c.

I
The next expedition up the river occurred only a year 775
previous to my arrival in the Rio Negro, when the steamer Choele-Choel ascended as far as the island, accompanied by a land force under the Commandante Murga. Indians were found occupying the island, and a European was reported as resident among them, and as exercising the authority of chief. Although he refused to hold any communication with the Argentine commander, it is most probable that this was the famous Frenchman Aurelie I., who was said to have obtained a supply of arms landed in the Rio Negro, and brought up to this island. The expedition did not think fit to disturb the Indians, and returned with little to show as the result of their journey.

It was in contemplation to despatch another expedition, but I have as yet heard no news of its progress from my Patagonian correspondents, and it is probably postponed till 'Mañana.'

The large island of Choele-Choel, which I know only by description, never having visited it, appears to be not only an important station if a military point of view, but also admirably adapted for cultivation; there are, however, some reasons against its occupation for that purpose: the first is the undoubted hostility of the Indians to any enterprise tending to occupy what they consider their country: secondly, its distance from Carmen or Patagones as a base